

**Talking Points on Upcoming NATA Release. Note: These are not for posting to web but will be covered in a fact sheet.**

- **On Wednesday, EPA will release the National Air Toxics Assessment, or NATA, for 2014.**
- **NATA is EPA's air toxics screening tool.** It uses emissions information to estimate exposure and risk from breathing air toxics.
- The purpose of NATA is to help EPA, and state, local and tribal agencies decide if areas, pollutants or types of sources need to be examined further.
- **Nationwide, levels of air toxics are decreasing,**
  - EPA's recent trends report showed air toxic levels trending downward - i.e., ambient monitoring data show that many air toxic air pollutants, such as benzene, are declining at most sites
- **But local areas still face challenges, and this most recent NATA shows that a number of areas could have elevated cancer risks from long-term exposure (many years) to the chemical *ethylene oxide*.**
- **These elevated risks are largely driven by an EPA risk value that was updated in late 2016.**
- **The estimates in NATA are for chronic exposures over many decades. NATA does not estimate short-term (acute) or intermediate risks.**
  - Ethylene oxide is used to sterilize equipment and plastic devices that can't be sterilized with steam, such as medical devices. It also is used to make other chemicals.
    - One of those is ethylene glycol, which is used to make everyday products such as antifreeze, PVC plumbing pipe, vinyl flooring and plastics products, including recyclable plastic containers and bottles.
- **EPA does two things when we see elevated risks in NATA:**
  - **First, the Clean Air Act regulatory program for air toxics requires EPA to reduce significant risk. So the agency has begun reviewing its regulations for facilities that emit ethylene oxide.**
  - **Second, if risks appear to be high enough, EPA will take a closer look -- getting more information to tell the agency if it needs to take action sooner.**
- **EPA will post information on efforts to address ethylene oxide on the web. The address will be [ HYPERLINK "<https://www.epa.gov/ethylene-oxide>" ]**
- **The NATA website, including information on uses and limitations, will be posted at [ HYPERLINK "<https://www.epa.gov/national-air-toxics-assessment>" ]**